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[For segregation policies imposed by White South Carolinians on the Sea Islanders, see Category 177.]

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Old Fort

361 DUSTY, WINDY LANES BORDERED WITH ROWS OF squat wooden houses, wide paved streets lined on each side with paintless one-story frame structures, the smells of river, fishboats, fertilizer plants and escaping gases, and overshadowing all, the gigantic gas reservoirs. That is the impression given by the Negro section of the Old Fort, located in the extreme northeastern section of Savannah. Here life goes on serenely for days, months. Then suddenly, 682 as it happened only a short time ago on a calm Sunday 754 morning, a woman is stabbed in the back and left writhing on the pavement to die before a swiftly gathering crowd. It was whispered among the frightened spectators that the death was caused by conjure, for despite all efforts to remove the knife it remained firmly embedded in the victim's back.

363 The streets present a monotonous aspect because of the absence of grass and trees. Yet the pedestrian is frequently 361 surprised to come upon a dead-end alley blocked by an old brick tenement house with lovely arched windows or to find gay flowers in boxes and tin cans on some of the low stoops. On several corners the houses abruptly give way to small grocery stores or beer parlors.

368 There are two Baptist churches and one Sanctified church in the Negro part of the Old Fort. Although the people 771 are devout believers in all the tenets of the Christian faith, many of them, particularly the old ones, are bound by older beliefs and superstitions. There exists among them a deep-

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Tin City

EASTWARD FROM SAVANNAH IN WEED-GROWN FIELDS lies Tin City, born of the depression and nurtured by the lean years that have followed. The little settlement, with its uncertain lanes winding through a maze of grass and tall shrubbery, stretches out over two hundred acres of land where long ago slaves labored in the black muck of rice fields.

To the west and south this land is touched by the ragged fringe of Savannah; to the north it sweeps away to the murky waters of the Savannah River. In 1819 the city of Savannah condemned the wet-culture rice lands and attempted to build up the unhealthy, low-lying acres with leaves and trash. With the passing years the place has been marked with peculiar ridges and mounds, the result of this building-up process. A wild growth of tall greenery covers the land.

About 1929 Louis Ellis, an old Negro who had been evicted from his home for non-payment of rent, secured permission from Savannah to settle on the land. His shack of discarded tin and his patch of a garden soon attracted other poverty stricken Negroes, and around him grew up a small community, self sufficient in its rent-free houses and its produce of garden and river. Although some of the settlers have abandoned the community and only about twenty remain, Tin City still leads its own independent existence. Within its precincts the fresh atmosphere of a country district prevails, for here and there a clump of chinaberry trees or an oak tree spreads shade, rows of sugar cane and

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TIN CITY

•361 green corn grow tall, and sweet potato and pumpkin vines
137 wander at random. The rusty little huts are built of scrap
tin, bits of cast-off shed roof, salvagings from automobile
342 junk yards, even discarded signs advertising soft drinks or
351 headache tablets. Each house is surrounded by a garden,
fenced either with uneven poles driven into the earth or with
ingenious odds and ends of junk. Now and then through
the coils of an old bed spring that serves as a fence a wild
morning glory vine climbs riotously, or beside a wall hangs
a yellow gourd effectively decorative above a row of
"greens."

632 Two men claim the mayoralty of the settlement. One,
115 through natural ability, has held the office almost from the
founding of the town. The other, settling later, simply an-
nounced that he was mayor. Both officials have a following
of political supporters.

Nathaniel John Lewis,* the first mayor, has a neat little one-room dwelling behind a board fence. As he politely apologized for not being at his best, a certain amount of schooling was evident in his speech, which was extremely soft, slow, and careful. He smiled with grim amusement when we asked if he knew anything about conjure or spells.

754 "Cunjuh?" he repeated. "That's what is wrong with this
ahm of mine. As I sit heah, I know that my enemy brought
about this affliction.[15] One night two, three yeahs ago, I put
out my hand to open my gate. Pain went into my palm jus
like stabbin with a shahp needle. This ahm has been no use
since then."

"Perhaps it is rheumatism?" we suggested.

"No, sir. It isn't. I know. An cunjuh must be fought with cunjuh.[6] If I know my enemy's name I could get somethin frum a cunjuh doctuh to help me seek revenge. But I am helpless."

"What would the doctor do about it?" we asked.

* *Nathaniel John Lewis, Tin City.*

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775 theah is treasure buried heah unduh me, but I wouldn't try
787 to get it. It is bad luck. That spirit warned me.
556 "I see witches, too," he continued. "Not everybody can
754 tell a witch, but I can. Theah's an old woman on Gwinnett Street with some cows. Othuh people don't know it, but she's the worse kind of witch. Not very long ago she came and rode a woman heah in Tin City and sucked uh blood.[69a] You ought to see that woman. She's so thin and weak she can't stand up."

"But isn't there some way to keep witches out?" we asked.
[789] "Yes, you can lay a bruhmstick cross the doe befo night an they can't come in. A little salt is good. They don't take to salt." [69a]

Then he insisted on returning to the subject of his magic book. We evinced the proper interest and he showed us a strange recipe jotted down in almost illegible writing on the flyleaf of this book.

Eggs—2
carisin—1 pint
turpentine—1 pint
vinegar
cy pepper
table salt—1 box

"That's a cunjuh mixin," the old man explained. "I
[759] don't know what it's faw. It was in the book when Joe Fraser, a root doctuh,[48] gave it to me."

"Where is Joe Fraser?"

"He is dead these long yeahs. All the real old root doctuhs are passin on to the beyon." And Nathaniel Lewis sadly stroked his lame arm.

• 361 We left him standing in his garden and went on down the winding path. On each side, closed away behind their fences,
342 stood the little houses of the town. One was made entirely of old signs; another was merely a battered automobile body

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*Yamacraw**

YAMACRAW TAKES ITS NAME FROM THE LITTLE INdian town that Tomochichi, chief and friend of General Oglethorpe, established on the Savannah River bluff west of the township of Savannah over two hundred years ago. Today waterfront industries have pushed the Negro district southward from the bluff, but it is still so close to the river that some of the small shanties rattle when winds roar across the water.

In this community the residents are drawn largely from coastal counties of Georgia and South Carolina. At one time an unruly element gained Yamacraw the reputation of being the toughest section of Savannah, but the presence of an unusual number of churches of various denominations seems to have improved law and order in recent years. Intense religious interest is aided by pride felt in the fact that the first Negro Baptist church in America was established here and also that Methodism gained an earlier start among Yamacraw Negroes than in any other part of the county.

In spite of the difference in religious doctrines there seem to be certain common beliefs handed down in families. We found an implicit and readily asserted faith in the power "tuh do unnatchul ting." Ghosts are everyday experiences. Root doctors are in constant demand.

** Old Yamacraw has gone. Since late in 1939 there has been a radical physical change under the program of the Federal Housing Administration. Two thirds of the tumble-down brick houses and wooden shanties in the once crowded area have been replaced by modern concrete buildings with low rentals for Negro tenants.*

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Frogtown and Currytown

WITHIN THE WESTERN LIMITS OF SAVANNAH ARE Frogtown and Currytown, through which flows Musgrove Creek, narrow and sluggish, on its way from "Big Ogeechee" to the red Savannah River. These are two poor communities, as can be seen from the paintless little houses on dirt streets that often lack sidewalks. With the canal cutting the center of the district, there is scant space for gardens; but in spite of this, there are small patches of earth green with collards and turnips, and almost every "stoop" is decorated with a row of plants in tins of assorted dimensions.

During week days, with many persons away at work in other sections of the city, it is mostly the old who are found at home. Grandmothers and grandfathers "mind" the small children while the mothers work out.

One old woman, Anna Miller,* had lived most of her youth on a Butler Island plantation, where some of the older workers had occupied the same cabins given to them before emancipation.

"Sebral uh dem hans wuz bery ole people," said Anna Miller. "Dey speak a funny language an none uh duh res ub us couldn hahdly unuhstan a wud dey say. Dey hab special name fuh all kine uh ting, but duh only ting I kin membuh is dat dey call a watuh bucket a 'juba haltuh'."

We found here, too, that in certain households certain foods are considered to bring bad luck.

"I dohn eat peanuts," Millie McKen ** told us, "an I dohn let a soul in muh fambly eat em."

* *Anna Miller, 101. Cuyler Street, Currytown.*
** *Millie McKen, 409 West Duffy Street, Currytown.*

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Springfield

361 ROWS OF FADED GREY HOUSES, HUDDLED CLOSE TOgether and facing on narrow dirt lanes, house the population of Springfield, a Negro community lying west of Savannah near the city waterworks. In the neighborhood are several (368) wooden churches of various denominations, a well constructed modern brick school building, and a number of stores that supply the six hundred odd Negroes of the community.

771 Many of the houses are shuttered, dim and quiet. So somber an atmosphere prevails that it is easy to imagine the (787) spectral figures that the Negroes claim they see wandering at night along the twisting pathways. It is not surprising to be told of the sinister powers which are constantly at work and against which many inhabitants of this locality are always on guard.

115 A familiar figure in the neighborhood is James Washing(791) ton,* famed locally as a fortune teller and root doctor. I is said that Washington's patronage is growing steadily; 22a. c. 48 (759) each day new clients visit his dilapidated house, seeking advice or perhaps a cure for some puzzling ailment that has descended upon them.

791 The consulting room is smoky, airless, and reeking with a queer pungent odor. The shades are drawn down tightly, 347 and when a visitor is being given advice the door is shut se(352) curely against intrusion. The furniture is scant, consisting of a lamp on a plain table, a couch for the visitor, and placed directly across the room a wooden armchair in which sits the 353 dealer in magic. The most remarkable object in the room is

* *James Washington, Springfield.*

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Brownville

361 BROWNVILLE, MORE PROSPEROUS OF ASPECT THAN the Negro communities usually fringing business and industry, spreads westward along the edge of Savannah. Though 342 on its Currytown boundary it, too, contains the inevitable shacks in lanes, several of its streets, paved and tree shaded, are lined with good frame and brick houses which are occupied by the more well-to-do Negroes, among them teachers, doctors, lawyers, and business men. A substantial school 368 building and the Charity Hospital speak of advanced social consciousness.

368 On Bismark Street is found the House of Prayer, one of the many churches established throughout the country by Bishop Grace. Here several times each year the leader visits 794 his congregation, and the day on which "Daddy Grace" * 16 793 returns to his flock is always a gala occasion. Regular members and visitors from outlying districts crowd the heavy 352 lumber benches of the House of Prayer. The air is tense with excitement. Above the confusion can be heard the strident but rhythmic beat of drums.[23] Bright splashes of color 794 are given by the crepe paper decorations and the vividly 292 contrasting military costumes of members of the church organizations, among which are the Lilies of the Valley, the Queens, the Royal Guards, the Silver Leaf Band, the Transportation Committee, Male Ushers No. 1, Male Ushers No. 2, and the Sons and Daughters of the Prophet. Others in the

* *Though the meetings of Bishop Grace are common to many parts of the United States, it was thought well to include an accurate description of the House of Prayer as it was found in this community.*

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Tatemville

EXTENDING SOUTHWEST FROM SAVANNAH OVER A widely scattered area is a section known locally as Tatemville. This settlement is inhabited largely by Negroes, some of whom are survivals of ante-bellum days.

It is interesting to note that a number of these old people in speaking of their fellow-slaves frequently prefix "Golla" to the given name.*

H. H. Miller,** an educated old man of this community, who has acquired considerable wealth, stated, "I knew many of the 'Golla' tribesmen who were brought to this country, when I was a boy. I think some can be found aroun these pahts now."

A palsied old man, William Newkirk,† who said he was born on the Newkirk place, obligingly replied to questions concerning root doctors and conjure, "Well, duh root doctuh wuz all we needed. Dey wuz bettuh dan duh doctuhs now-a-days. Deah wuzn all uh dis yuh cuttin an wen yuh sick, duh root doctuh would make some tea an gib yuh aw sumpm tuh rub wid an das all. Den fo yuh know it, yuh wuz all right.[49a] He would fix tings fuh yuh ef somebody done put sumpm down fuh yuh. Deah wuz many ways tuh wuk it. Sometime he would gib yuh sumpm tuh weah wid yuh aw sumpm tuh take." [6]

Spirits are a reality to Esther Jones,‡ obviously a woman

* *See Introduction.*
** *H. H. Miller 46th and Pearl Streets.*
† *William Newkirk, Tatemville.*
‡ *Esther Jones 308 West 46th Street.*

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White Bluff

HUGE, MOSS-HUNG OAKS FORM A CANOPY AND CAST filigreed shadows upon the White Bluff Road, which passes directly through the quiet Negro community of White Bluff, eight miles southeast of Savannah.

Winding roads turn from the main highway and terminate in the various sections which form the settlement and which are known as Nicholsonboro, Rose Dhu, Twin Hill, and Cedar Grove. The sections east of the White Bluff Road are on the Vernon River. It is here that many of the inhabitants make their living by catching crab and fish which they sell in the city markets. West of the highway the narrow roads lead through thickly wooded areas of great beauty. Along these roads families have cleared small tracts and built their homes, reserving garden space for flowers and vegetables. In the summer wild crepe myrtle trees, with blossoms as luscious a red as the heart of the watermelon, contrast colorfully with the bright blue paint on the doors and trimmings of some of the houses.

The White Bluff Road, which for two miles forms the main street of the community, passes the houses of other residents set well back from the road. Most of them are small and unpretentious but well kept. At intervals of perhaps half a mile are three rural grocery stores; farther along is a whitewashed church with red and blue glass windows, and at the farthest extremity of the settlement is a similar but larger church.

The inhabitants, of which there are approximately four

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hundred, are deeply religious and lay great stress on being "Christian people." Many of the older inhabitants were formerly slaves on a large plantation on St. Catherines Island. After the War between the States many of these Negroes moved to White Bluff, built their homes, reared their families, and have lived to see two generations reach maturity. With all their fervent Christian doctrines the old people have an unwavering faith in many of the beliefs taught them by their grandparents. A few remember their ancestors who were brought from Africa on slave ships.

The younger group seem carefree as they perform their tasks in the cool part of the morning. It is not unusual to see several young men lying on a shady porch resting or happily engaged in a card game as early as ten o'clock on a summer morning. These young people have little faith in the practices of their elders, but they believe profoundly in the power of certain charms to affect luck and love.[8]

Having heard that Sophie Davis was one of the oldest persons in the community, we visited her and found her cordial in her reception. Sophie * does not know her exact age, but was eight at the time of the war. She is very short and very stout with gray hair and a very large smiling face. The day we saw her she wore a cotton print dress with gray predominating. Her sparkling eyes expressed her interest in current happenings of the community, and when she laughed, her eyes became mere slits and her shoulders shook.

Indicating a small bush growing beside the doorway of her little cabin, Sophie told us, "Some uh duh folks heah sho belieb in some queah tings. Yuh see dis lill bush—it call Cherokee an mos uh duh folks yuh plants it at duh doe. It bring um good luck.[34c] Lot uh medicine an cuos is made frum udduh roots and herbs an some uh duh folks uses um wen dey's sick." [43]

We inquired as to the kind of herbs used.

* *Sophie Davis, White Bluff.*

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Pin Point

PIN POINT, A NEGRO COMMUNITY ABOUT NINE MILES southeast of Savannah, is scattered over some twenty or thirty acres on a peninsula overlooking Shipyard Creek. Many of the small wooden cabins are neatly whitewashed and are half hidden by shrubbery and spreading oaks. Flowers and vegetables are planted in the most advantageous sunny spots near the houses and most of the yards are enclosed by picket fences, giving a cozy and pleasant privacy. The lanes, little more than wagon tracks, twist in and out and across the settlement. The informal and haphazard scattering of the houses, with high shrubbery bordering the lanes, gives an effect that is pleasing and unusual.

Pin Point has a church, a pavilion on the tidewater creek, and a crab cannery. The men and women who do not work as domestic servants at the nearby country places find employment in the crab cannery or fish and crab and shrimp for themselves. The life is quiet, soothed by the smell of the salt marsh.

It is only when some great excitement takes place, a stirring religious service, a dance at the community pavilion, a death,[37b, c] or some scandal concerning a neighbor, that quiet Pin Point bestirs itself. Recently, one of the fishermen ventured into the foreign waters of the Ogeechee about ten miles distant and there he was almost devoured by an alligator. All that was left of him, "the ham," was given a burial [2] amid the loud lamentations of his relatives and neighbors.

The people are, almost without exception, black or dark

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Sandfly

SANDFLY, ABOUT NINE MILES SOUTHEAST OF SAVANnah, is a scattered Negro community spreading through the hot pine barrens to the Isle of Hope. There is nothing unusual or outstanding about the sleepy little settlement; its three hundred inhabitants appear to lead a placid, uneventful existence.

Many of the houses are situated on a side road which leads to the Isle of Hope. Modern conveniences are lacking, but the nondescript dwellings are brightened by flower gardens in the front yards, while small truck gardens occupy the space to the rear and sides. The more substantial houses of the more prosperous citizens are set deep in the wooded sections and are reached by means of narrow winding paths bordered with giant moss-hung oak trees.

Usually life in Sandfly flows along pleasantly and without serious interruption. Even in the morning men and women sit around on porches or in yards, sometimes talking, sometimes dozing in the sun. The more industrious are at work in the gardens or may be seen through doors busily occupied in washing or ironing clothes. Many of the men are employed as fishermen or day laborers, and the women who work out are generally engaged as house servants in homes at near-by Isle of Hope.

At first residents of the community were reluctant to talk about their superstitions and beliefs and their knowledge of conjure. Their customary response when first approached was a laconic, "No, ma'am, I ain got no fait in sech tings as

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Grimball's Point

GRIMBALL'S POINT, LYING AT THE NORTHWESTERN end of the Isle of Hope on the marshes and creeks that run from the wide Skidaway River, is one of the characteristic spots of Savannah's rural landscape. The lowland spreads grassy flats against the horizon; the squawks of marsh hen rise from the long reeds on Grimball's Creek; all the year round a familiar sight is the Negro fisherman sitting patiently in his small bateau or trudging with his plump catch up an old oak-shaded shell road.

A few white residents maintain comfortable summer homes at Grimball's Point, but the settlers scattered on the southern part of the point are Negroes, former slaves and descendants of slaves who once worked the great plantations on the Isle of Hope and other near-by islands. Some of the inhabitants are employed on Grimball's Point hunting preserve, while others are farmers or fishermen. Their abodes are frame bungalows with front porches or little shacks of one or two rooms, but most of the dwellings are surrounded by sun-dappled yards, fenced with boards or chicken wire. Each has its backyard pump as there is no running water.

Of the ten Negro families on the point, young and old believe in signs and auguries. "Catfish Tom" William, Habersham Gibson, and Solomon Gibson professed to know that "some signs sho do wuk." Thomas Tuten, who has spent his fifty-eight years on the island, warned us that "yuh sho has tuh watch people cuz dey kin do yuh." Aging Aunt Cinda Smith, employed on the old Wiley place, is given the respect

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Harris Neck

TURNING OFF FROM THE COASTAL HIGHWAY NEAR Riceboro a tree-shaded dirt road leads to Harris Neck, a remote little settlement connected to the mainland by a causeway and located about forty-eight miles south of Savannah. Narrow, rutted roads curve and turn unexpectedly through the densely wooded area. Set singly or in little clusters of two or three and sometimes almost hidden by the trees and foliage are the houses of the inhabitants. There is a peaceful atmosphere about the entire island; life flows along in a smoothly gliding stream; the people seem satisfied for the most part with a simple, uneventful scheme of existence.

The first house we stopped at was that of Ed Thorpe,* a familiar and well liked character in the section. A small, neatly inscribed placard placed near the gate bore the owner's name. The attractive house was set well back from the road in a large grove of oak trees. A whitewashed fence protected the property.

The old man, who was eighty-three years old, was working in the side yard adjoining the house. His broad, erect shoulders and his bright alert eyes made him appear to be much younger than his actual age. He told us proudly that he had lived in this particular house for twenty-five years. Then he apologized because his present circumstances prevented him from having the house and fence repainted.

We discussed native Africans and Ed Thorpe remembered that his grandmother had come from Africa.

* *Ed Thorpe, Harris Neck.*

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Pine Barren Near Eulonia

122 (491) AFTER THE MUDDY RUTS THROUGH THE PINE clearing had ended, there was no road, and the car jerked and bounded about among the pine trees. The soft brown needles made better traveling than the boggy wagon tracks that were behind us, but our method of procedure was rather bewildering, for there was no mark by which to retrace our tracks. As we went deeper into the pine woods there was no sign of habitation.

(115) Our driver,* who had offered to help us when our car had stuck in the bog, was a six-foot, shiny black Negro, strong necked and lithe, with a twelve-inch hunting knife strapped to his hip. We had never seen him before, nor the smaller Negro beside him on the front seat. In the back seat we were concerned with our feet, which rested precariously among loose cartridge shells. We feared that a sudden jolt from a pine stump might make us stamp down on the shells and explode them.

•361 Suddenly we came upon a reed and paling fence higher than the head of a tall man. There was nothing to be seen over the top of it, no sign of occupation. We drove around to the side where, protected by some feathery bushes, a small opening hardly distinguishable from the palings led into an enclosure. Scattered without plan about a smooth sand clearing were three or four small unpainted wooden cabins, two connected by a narrow board walk just above the ground. Other smaller structures, sheds, and work tables were placed

* *Reuben Taylor, Eulonia.*

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helter-skelter about the enclosure. There was some wire fencing, but dogs, cats, chickens, a litter of very young puppies, and an old rooster roamed at will. Sunning themselves against a cabin wall were two old women, and from the windows of another cabin popped the heads of three curious younger women. An open door suddenly gave forth several children, smiling and scantily clad, shining eyes and surprised faces upturned to the strangers.

The two elderly women rose and came forward to greet us. Our guide explained our mission and inquired as to the whereabouts of Uncle Ben Washington, with whom we wished to talk. Aunt Sarah,* who was Uncle Ben's wife, explained that her husband had gone to work in the woods early that morning.

A glance at the dense forest surrounding the little clearing convinced us that Uncle Ben would be unlikely to hear the halloos with which our guides were attempting to summon him.

Just as we were about to abandon the venture a unique figure appeared inside the fence and Reuben Taylor, the older of our guides, exclaimed, "Deah's Uncle Ben now." Uncle Ben ** appeared in a long frock coat and high felt hat, carrying a walking stick. It was difficult to understand how he could have worked in such a costume. He seemed young for the eighty-five years he claimed, for he moved about with considerable agility.

As he drew nearer, Aunt Sarah went forward to greet him and the two old people came toward us together. When we again explained about the information we were seeking, Uncle Ben said with grave courtesy that he was glad to have visitors.

Thinking of the precarious journey that lay behind us and wondering how far from the main road this little settlement

* *Sarah Washington, in the pine woods about five miles from Eulonia.*
** *Ben Washington, in the pine woods about five miles from Eulonia.*

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might be, we asked Uncle Ben how often he went to town. He shook his head slowly. "We dohn nebuh go tuh duh road," he said. "We got ebryting we needs right yuh."

Aunt Sarah nodded her gray head in agreement. "Seems lak we libed yuh fuh mos ub our libes," she stated simply. "We built deze houses wen we fus come yuh. All duh chillun wuz raise yuh an we nebuh take up no time wid duh folks on duh outside. Nebuh did set no sto by mixin wid strainjuhs an sech doins."

Incredible as it seemed, they were speaking the truth. For half a century they had lived in this isolated spot, only a few miles from a frequently traversed highway.

Despite their evident liking for solitude the old couple were not averse to answering our questions. "Is there much conjure and magic around here, Uncle Ben?" we asked.

"I heah tell uh tings lak dat," he answered and looked up with a sly quizzical smile. "Ise heahd bout bein cunjuhed an I know fuh true deah's sech tings as magic." Uncle Ben chuckled, "Ef yuh ebuh see a cross mahk in duh road, yuh nebuh walk obuh it. Das real magic. Yuh hab tuh go roun it. It's put deah by a enemy an ef yuh walks cross it, duh ebil spell will cause yuh hahm.[15] Duh cross is a magic sign an hab tuh do wid duh spirits."

"Ef dat happens," said Aunt Sarah, "reckon bout duh only ting yuh could do would be tuh see a root doctuh.[48] He gib yuh sumpm wut cuos yuh."[8]

Uncle Ben turned to us. "Lots uh folks carry hans all duh time an dis bring em luck an keep duh ebil spirits away."[8, 12a, c, d]

The old man seemed unable to describe these good luck charms, but he was more successful in describing the charms used in conjuring an enemy.

"Dey is made mosly frum haiah aw nails an lots uh times duh dus frum yuh foot track," he said.[7]

Aunt Sarah's face darkened. "Ain nobody git my haiah"

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Possum Point

491 A WINDING TREE-SHADED DIRT ROAD LEADS FROM Darien up the Altamaha to the Negro community of Possum (132) Point. The freshets in the section rise in the rainy season and the road is often flooded. On either side the trees are mirrored in the shallow water which surrounds them. In the 137 spring against the fresh green of the trees and foliage there is the soft color of wild honeysuckle and Cherokee Rose. Through the thickly-massed trees the sun filters dimly; a misty, unreal atmosphere overhangs the entire scene.

342 Set back from the roadway are occasional small dwelling places, with boards turned dun-colored from age and expo- 351 sure. Neatly tended vegetable and flower gardens stretch out to the front and sides of the houses. The owners can be 461 found industriously working in the gardens, sitting on the porches, or gathered in little groups along the road. Here (491) and there small bridges span the road, and at each of these a number of persons are often seen leisurely fishing, their long bamboo poles forming graceful arcs from the bank to the water.

115 We had been told that Alec Anderson was an old man and one who would be able to enlighten us regarding the beliefs prevalent in that section. We stopped a few times to inquire 491 where he lived. After continuing for several miles, the road turned to the right. It swerved again a short distance later and continued in a narrow, uneven pathway through the •361 woods. This section was but sparsely settled and we glimpsed a cabin only now and then.

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Darien

THE NEGROES OF THE DARIEN SECTION, MANY OF whom live in small scattered communities outside the town, are proud of their Darien ancestry. When the younger people migrate to larger communities, it is a common thing to hear them say proudly, "My people come frum Darien."

One of the most typical settlements is opposite the Todd Grant Negro School. A few houses are clustered about the knoll facing the school building, and more dilapidated board shacks are scattered over the little hill. At the top is Aunty Jane Lewis' cabin, surrounded by small sheds and fenced patches of ground where chickens and a goat are kept from wandering too far. At the north a few cypress trees straggle off to the wood. A sturdy bush provides the sunny drying ground for the gourds that later will be used as water dippers.

Aunty Jane * claims that she is one hundred and fifteen years old, and to see the small bent woman with the deeply lined black skin and filmy eyes is to believe her claim. Her voice is high pitched, with the thin timbre of extreme age, but she still moves with sudden agile gestures. During our conversation she hopped up from the steps and began to do the Buzzard Lope [17] to illustrate her story.

"I belong tuh Robert Toodle wut lib in Nawt Calina an he sole me down yuh wen Ise twenty-one. I ain membuh much bout Nawt Calina but uh membuhs plenty bout duh ole days yuh, cuz I bin yuh neah bout a hunnud yeahs. I be-

* *Jane Lewis, Darien.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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Georgia

point Aunty Jane rose to give us an exhibition of two dances, the Buzzard Lope and the Snake Hip.[17]

Across the highway from Aunty Jane's settlement, about one mile north of Darien, back of a turpentine still, is an irregular settlement of small houses, most of which are enclosed by high dilapidated paling fences. Here Wallace Quarterman * occupied a cabin with his daughter, Abby Gibson. Wallace was old but with a clear mind, and he enjoyed a high standing in his community. We felt that he would know about the old beliefs and customs.

We left the highway on a narrow dirt road, little more than a path through the bush, and after much winding in and out we came upon a street of Negro cabins with their enclosed yards, vegetable patches, and tumbled down sheds. Wallace was sitting on the porch of Abby's house. Lizzie Sanders volunteered to be our guide and paid a visit to Wallace along with us.

We asked him how old he was and where he was born.

"Ise bawn July 14, 1844. Now figguh dat out fuh yuhsef, missus. Ise bawn at Sout Hampton, Libuty County, an I belong tuh Roswell King, but he done die long bout sometime in duh fifties an Ise sole fuh debt tuh Cunl Fred Waring on Skidaway Ilun. Ise bin bout fifteen wen I sen tuh Skidaway."

For a long time we had wanted to establish some connection with Skidaway Island that reached back before the War between the States. We questioned Wallace about the church on Skidaway.

"We sho did hab big time goin tuh chuch in doze days. Not many uh deze Nigguhs kin shout tuhday duh way us could den. Yuh needs a drum fuh shoutin."

We asked if they shouted to a drum then.

"We sho did. We beat a drum at duh chuch an we beat a drum on duh way tuh duh grabeyahd tuh bury um. We

* *Wallace Quarterman, Darien. Deceased autumn, 1938.*

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115 one-quarter Indian. While we were on the subject of Indians, he remembered a rusty part of an old Indian gun which he had found in the vicinity. Displaying this, he explained in detail how the trigger struck a piece of flint, thereby igniting the powder.

322 532 (412) We inquired about his wood carving and he showed us some of the wooden figures about which we had been told. One of these, a spoon of cedar, was about a foot in length and had the roughly-sculptured head of a man on its handle (Plate IIc).[411a] A The head was square in shape, the features were only slightly raised, and the eyes were nail heads.[411a] Another item was a frog [411] which, with eyes of brass nail heads, crouched on a block of wood (Plate IVc). B The frog and the stand had been carved from a solid piece of wood [701, b] and lightly varnished.

As we left, the old man promised us, "Wen I gits muh hans back intuh use, I hopes tuh cahve a cane wid a gatuh on it lak duh ones I made long ago. Wen I do, I sho sen it tuh yuh."

We had no idea that we would hear from him again, but a few months later he wrote us that he had made a stick especially for us. This proved to be of stout cedar carved with a large alligator and topped with the bust of a Negro man cut all in one with the body of the stick and painted black to signify his race (Plate IVa). B The smooth, almost square, protruding skull of the figure, its small, high-set ears, broad mouth, blue bead eyes driven in by minute steel nailheads, and little short arms with four-fingered hands are all noteworthy points. The alligator's eyes are also blue beads driven in by nailheads.

• 361 After leaving William Rogers, we retraced our way back over the winding dirt roadway into Darien and from the town we drove eastward through a residential section. The houses here were substantial and attractive, surrounded by

A, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]
B, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-D--Analyst]

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Georgia

•361 trim lawns, and the thoroughfare was shaded by old moss-hung trees. After a distance the road narrowed; for a time there were no houses in sight; then we came to the Low Bluff community. Negro cabins dotted the landscape and the settlement terminated at a grassy bluff where stood the last small house.

115 342 We were looking for Priscilla McCullough * and the obliging neighbors directed us to her house. It stood to the left of the roadway, a queer haphazard little dwelling place that looked like something out of a fairy tale. It was a tumble-down house, painted white, its roof patched with pieces of loose roofing which overlapped one another and hung down some distance in the front. An irregular fence [351] made alternately of board and wire surrounded it. The tiny [352] porch was crowded with old pieces of furniture and miscellaneous items, including half of a tattered screen which hung [343] at one side. Near the house a second building leaned at such a precarious angle that it could be expected to tumble over momentarily.

115 We made our way down the little dirt walk and into the house and there in the center of the room sat Priscilla. She was sewing on a mattress which almost filled the small space. Even the bizarre exterior had not prepared us for the appearance of the inside of the house. Here again there was [353] so much crowded together that it took a while before separate articles could be clearly seen. Jumbled closely around Priscilla was a mass of furniture, each article of which was in turn almost hidden by a burden of clothing, dishes, bottles, pictures, and items too numerous to mention.

[416] Priscilla adjusted her eyeglasses which were tied on with a shoestring and told us something of her early life. She said she had been "bawn tree yeahs fo freedom in Sumtuh, Sout Calina." As quite a young woman she had moved to

* *Priscilla McCullough, near Darien.*

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NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

SAPELO ISLAND

•361 Small Negro settlements are scattered at the north end of
491 Sapelo and are reached by winding roads that cut through
the tropical woodlands and brush. The Negroes are de-
461 scendants of the slaves of the plantation era. Many lead an
easy, carefree life which consists chiefly of fishing, crabbing,
and cultivating a small patch of garden, while others engage
in regular employment at the sawmill or in the company
offices.

178 Living an isolated island existence, these Negroes have
preserved many customs and beliefs of their ancestors, as
well as the dialect of the older coastal Negro. An old oxcart
(493) (Plate XVI)[A] jogging along a tree shaded road is a familar
(412) sight, and under the guidance of a Negro boy named Julius
we discovered instances of crude wooden implements in com-
(124) mon usage. The many Negroes interviewed gave a graphic
picture of survival elements that have persisted since the
days when slave ships brought their ancestors to the new
country.

115 One of the oldest inhabititants is Katie Brown (Plate
XV),•[B] whose grandmother, Margaret, was a daughter of
Belali Mohomet, the Mohammedan slave driver of Thomas
Spalding. Katie, sunning herself on the back steps of her
small house, was disposed to be gracious to us. Shaking her
(123) head at the size of the shoes brought to her as an incentive to
conversation, she relented at the sight of some pipe tobacco
and began to talk:

533 "I dunno bout drums at chuches. Use tuh hab um long
534 time ago, but not now on duh ilun,—leas I ain heah um.
Hahves time wuz time fuh drums. Den dey hab big times.[25]
527 Wen hahves in, dey hab big gadderin. Dey beat drum,
rattle dry goad wid seed in um, an beat big flat tin
plates.[22, 25] Dey shout an moob roun in succle an look lak
mahch goin tuh heabm. Hahves festival, dey call it."

764 In response to our query about "set-ups" Katie replied,

• *Katie Brown, Sapelo Island.*

A, [See Category 493, plate following p. xxxii-U--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii-Q and R--Analyst]

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the current belief concerning the necessity of asking leave to enter the graveyard.

"Grant Johnson, he wannuh cut some wood an he git obuh duh fence uh duh cimiterry," he explained to us. "He didn ax leab uh nobody." He wuz a cuttin duh wood down as fas as he could wen all ub a sudden he see a big black dog wut [54] come attuh im. Dat wuz a shadduh an he ain lose no time in jumpin obuh duh fence.

"Wen yuh hab a fewnul eben today, yuh hab tuh ax leab tuh entuh duh cimiterry gate. Duh spirit ain gonuh let yuh in lessn yuh ask leab ub it."

We visited Nero Jones,* an elderly Negro who lived on his sixty-five-acre tract of land with a daughter, Henrietta. Sitting beneath the protecting shade of an arbor which overlooked a peanut field, the old man was busily engaged in shucking a large basket of the nuts.

He, too, remembered having seen harvest dances. "We use tuh hab big time at hahves," [33] he began. "We pray an sing duh night tru. Wen duh sun riz we go out an dance. We hab big beatin uh drums an sometimes we dry duh goads an leab duh seed in um. Dey make good rattle.[33, 35]

"I membuh Uncle Calina an An Hannah well. Dey mighty ole an dey bun up in duh house. Day talk lot uh funny talk tuh each udduh an dey is mighty puhticuluh bout prayin. Dey pray on duh bead. Duh ole man he say 'Ameela' and An Hannah she say 'Hakabara.'"

Later we drove slowly over the flat grass-lands to Hog Hammock, another Negro community at the south end of Sapelo. The red-legged herons winging their way against the vivid blue of the sky, the dense foliage rimming the edges of the inland marshes, clumps of feathery bush, all contributed to the tropical beauty of the island.

At Hog Hammock we visited Shad Hall (Plate XVII),** A

* *Nero Jones, Sapelo Island.*
** *Shad Hall, Sapelo Island.*

A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-V--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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to give way to a growth of towering oaks; then it joined again, resuming its winding trail through the quiet, shadowed countryside.

The little settlement now known as Harrington was formerly the property of the Demere family. A little less than a mile north of this settlement was Harrington Hall, home of Raymond Demere, who came to this country with Oglethorpe after serving ten years under Lord Harrington at Gibraltar.

To the left of the road was a small unpainted store operated by Ryna Johnson's daughter with whom she lived. Various advertisements on the front of the small building gave splashes of color to the green of trees and foliage.

Set back from the store was Ryna's house, surrounded by an expanse of short grass upon which a horse was grazing. The house was weathered with age, as were the vertical boards of the fence that enclosed the garden; here and there in the fence a new unpainted board, regardless of length, had replaced an old, and the top presented an irregular, jagged pattern. The cabin was the usual two-room affair but with a hall through the center and a lean-to in the back. The walls were papered with newspapers and, although there was a motley collection of objects and furniture, everything was scrupulously clean.

Ryna * was blind from cataracts and had not been feeling very well; so she had just got up from bed. Although her body was bent and very feeble, her mind was still clear.

"Ise bout eighty-five yeahs ole, but I caahn tell zackly. I belong tuh duh Coupers wen I wuk on duh plantation. It bin sech a long time I mos stop studyin bout dem days. But I membuh we use tuh hab good times."

In answer to our inquiry regarding any Africans whom she had known during plantation days, Ryna told us, "Alexanduh, Jummy, an William, dey is all African. I membuh ole William well an he tell me lots bout times in Africa. Dey

* *Ryna Johnson, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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say all his fambly in Africa could fly. I ain seen em fly muhsef but he say he could do it all right. We's sked ub im wen we's boys an use tuh run wen we see im come."

During the interview Emma, Charles' wife, hovered nearby, seemingly very much interested in the proceedings. Finally we asked her to come and talk to us. Although she said that she was too young to remember much of the old times, she gave us some recollections regarding superstitions and African customs.

"Now muh gran Betty she wuz African an she plant benne seed. Once yuh staht plantin benne, yuh got tuh plant em ebry yeah aw yuh die. I tell yuh who kin tell yuh sumpm bout ole times an das Chahls Murray. He ain tell me how ole he is but I ketch he age jis duh same. Yuh go down tuh duh main road a lill way an duh road spring off tuh Chahls Murray house."

Emma also told us how to reach Ben Sullivan, one of the oldest men living on the island.

From Hunter's we turned left on a lane flanked by a thicket of low trees and bushes. After about two or three miles we came to a clearing where there was a scattering of houses and sheds.

A tall, spare man was plowing in a field to the left of the road. We hailed him and asked him if he could help us find Ben Sullivan. He left his mule and plow and came over to the car. He was tall, as straight as a soldier, with a lean agility that bespoke youthfulness. Over his long jaws and rather straight features his copper skin was smooth.

"Ise Ben Sullivan," * he said, and we were puzzled.

"But," we said, "the Ben Sullivan we are looking for is an old man."

"Ise duh only Ben Sullivan," he answered. "Ise eighty-eight."

It seemed incredible that this active, intensely alive man

* *Ben Sullivan, St. Simons Island.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

St. Marys

THE NEGROES OF ST. MARYS LIVE SCATTERED ABOUT the town and its outskirts. In the past few years many of the very old people have died and there remain only a few who are past eighty years old. We went to see Hettie Campbell,* who was only seventy-two. Her mother had belonged to Dr. Wright of St. Marys and all her ante-bellum knowledge had been imparted to her by her mother and her stepfather, Andrew King. When we drove up she was sitting on the porch of her small house. The front garden was a packed dirt yard with formal plantings of flowers and shrubbery. During most of our talk Hettie's son, Horace,** stood in the doorway, half interested in and half amused by the conversation.

We asked Hettie to tell us about the old times.

"I remembuh Uncle Patty an Ahnt Rachel. They wuz frum Africa. Aftuh the waw wen they move from the plantation, they lived in a house on the watuhfront an they use tuh talk funny tuh each othuh so none of us chilluns couldn unduhstan em. I dohn remembuh so much bout em cuz uh wuz mighty lill then, but Henry Williams he remembuhs all right. Henry's eighty-seven yeahs ole.

"I do remembuh the big times we use tuh have wen I wuz young. We does plenty uh dances in those days. Dance roun in a ring. We has a big time long bout wen crops come in an evrybody bring sumpm tuh eat wut they makes an we

* *Hettie Campbell, St. Marys. Deceased autumn, 1939.*
** *Horace Campbell, St. Marys.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

133 malaw, and Edisto islands to Beaufort; down past St. Helena, Hunting,
103 Fripp, and Parris islands; past Hilton Head and Daufuski to Savannah;
from Tybee, Wassaw, Ossabaw, and St. Catherines to Sapelo; past St.
Simons and Jekyll islands to Cumberland on the Georgia-Florida
133 border—the Sea Islands guard the coast. The coastline is intersected not
only by Winyah and Bull bays, Charleston Harbor, and St. Helena, Port
Royal, Sapelo, and St. Andrew sounds, but also by many lesser inlets
curling around the Sea Islands. Bounded on one side by the ocean and on
the other by the salt marsh, these Sea Islands use the energy of wind and
wave to build sand barriers that protect the mainland from storm and
surf.

131 The Sea Islands north of Charleston are often older beach resorts
179 such as Pawleys Island and the Isle of Palms. Their residents and visitors are mainly white. Other islands are wildlife sanctuaries such as
the 31,000-acre Cape Romaine National Wildlife Refuge, the 20,000-
136 acre Tom Yawkee Wildlife Center on South Island, and the 17,000-
185 acre Belle W. Baruch research facilities on Hobcaw Barony. They
serve as home for such endangered species as the bald eagle, the Eastern brown pelican, the short-nosed sturgeon, and the loggerhead turtle.

131 Many islands south of Charleston are populated entirely or primarily
• 361 by blacks, whose venerable folk culture and vivid creole language are
the subject of this book. On the coastal mainland adjacent to the Sea
Islands are black people who share that folk culture and that creole
language. While they are not—strictly speaking—Sea Islanders, in
many ways this book tells their story too.

175 For two centuries this coastal region has been the home of enslaved
569 Africans and their descendants. Theirs is a sad but inspiring story.
They built—in a very literal sense—the plantations, and they tilled the
rich fields of rice, indigo, or Sea Island cotton. Some of the slaves
were brought to the Sea Islands by Barbadian planters who migrated to
the Carolina colony in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a
refuge from the overcrowding of Barbados. Many more were imported
directly from Africa. By the American Revolution the slaves, from
various parts of Africa and from various ethnic and linguistic groups,
had already created a distinctive culture. During the Civil War, when
white planter families fled the Sea Islands before the invading Union
troops, Sea Island blacks began to cultivate the land for themselves.
Hundreds of them joined the Union Army in the celebrated First South
Carolina Volunteers. On January 16, 1865, General William Tecumseh

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

Sherman's famous Special Field Order No. 15 set aside for the former slaves "the islands from Charleston south [and] the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea." Within weeks black homesteaders were happily farming their own plots on Edisto, Wadmalaw, Johns, and James islands. By September, President Andrew Johnson had nullified Sherman's order. Many freedmen were dispossessed, but others tenaciously held on to their lands and passed them on to their descendants. Some even managed to buy more land at the end of the nineteenth century as whites again abandoned the islands after years of feeble cotton prices and a series of killer hurricanes. For the first half of the twentieth century blacks continued to be in the majority on the Sea Islands, and land values continued to be low.

For generations the Sea Islanders lived under the same hot sun, surrounded by the same sea and salt marsh, forming a barrier that isolated them from the mainland. For generations fishermen flung their nets into creeks and marshes and ocean for crabs, shrimp, and fish; and they gathered oysters and clams. These supplied both local markets and their own kitchens. For generations islanders cultivated their own little plots of land. Farmers hoed the loamy soil of the islands to produce crops of beans, peas, and cotton. First there was the planting, then the weeding, then the reaping. In the winter women sewed clothes and made quilts; the men looked for work ashore. In the spring they started the cycle over from the beginning—the planting, the weeding, the reaping.

The years passed: the young grew old and the old died. And the planting, seeding, and reaping, and the fishing, shrimping, and crabbing went on. And each spring the cycle started over again. Each year was like the year before. Each generation was like the generation before. For generations there were the same prayers and the same hopes, the same faith and the same fear, the same work and the same result. For generations there was the same old, hard legacy of slavery that robbed men and women of their honor, a legacy visited upon the children and the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren, a legacy against which honest hard work seemed useless, a legacy so old it took its place among natural phenomena like the wind and the rain.

It was not an easy life; but it was a self-sufficient life adapted to the environment, a life shaped by a rich folk culture. Cut off from the mainland, generations of Sea Islanders preserved their cultural heritage, reflecting both continuity with Africa and creativity in the New World.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

Table 1. Land Use for BCD Region

Category	Acres	% of Total
Developed areas		
Urban uses	75,000	4.29
Residential	21,000	1.20
Commercial	3,500	0.20
Industrial	12,600	0.72
Public and other	37,900	2.17
Agricultural uses		
Cropland and pasture	178,800	10.23
Forest and woodlands (excluding swampland forests)	861,740	49.30
Undeveloped areas		
Marsh and swampland	416,600	23.83
Inland waterways	140,800	8.06
Total	1,747,940	100.00

Source: BCD Council of Governments, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1975, p. 5; figuring corrected.

the islands to the mainland before 1940. Though considerable sums of money have been expended within recent years on the construction of long, narrow bridges to span the Atlantic coast, ocean recesses, rivers, and streams, the more remote islands, such as Sandy and Daufuski, continue to be inaccessible except by boat.[7] Most of the Sea Islands remain very sparsely settled despite the population growth brought on by recent industrialization and commercialization. The landscape is pastoral and mysterious compared to inland areas of the United States. Most islands are characterized by graceful palmetto trees, expansive green terrain, and atmospheric haze. The landscape in fact bears a striking resemblance to the topography of such coastal countries as Nigeria, Ghana, Angola, and Liberia, the tropical homelands of the Sea Islanders' ancestors.[8]

Electricity came to the more remote islands only as recently as the 1960s. Streetlights rarely line the narrow roadways of even the more developed islands, and in late evening the overhanging trees give the roads a ghostly allure. After nightfall it is literally impossible to see even two feet ahead.[9]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

CHAPTER 9

Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters

175 All was silent on the plantation. The sun had gone down and the chill December wind which blew crisply from the tide-river had driven the people into the cabins. Here and there all over the plantation, like the throbbing stars which night had called to light her world, the red glow of the fireplaces flashed out into the darkness through the open doorways, as if to mark the heart of a home. Suddenly a sharp persistent jingle broke the silence. It was the Praise House bell calling the people of the plantation together for their evening "Praise". . . .*

575 771 The secret societies are an embodiment of . . . supernatural power. Collectively, they provide an institutional structure which bears . . . similarities to the medieval church in Europe. . . . They lay down various rules of conduct, prescribe certain forms of behavior and are the sole agency capable of remitting certain sins.**

175 567 On the Sea Islands, one rarely saw a plantation home that did justice to the name "big house," since most planters maintained their more elegant residences elsewhere. But there was always a large, airy "main house," sometimes inhabited by the planter and his family during the spring and cold season. The main house was situated about half a mile from the overseer's abode. Not too far away from the overseer's residence were the yards and outbuildings, followed by the slave quarters. Gullahs called their quarters "the street," and it was described as "a real street in the

[361]

[113] *"The Long Look," n.d., misc. corr., Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC.
**Kenneth Little, "The Role of the Secret Society in Cultural Specialization" American Anthropologist 51 (1949): 199.

[p. 276]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

middle of a sandy cotton field, with cabins on each side in a row." The first building on the street was the Praise House, a paintless, cheerless-appearing building of boards that "looked as if a heavy gale might lay it low." Some antebellum Praise Houses were equipped with a bell (not to be confused with the driver's horn). Several nights during the week, as well as on Sundays, its welcoming, soothing sound brought the people on "the street" together for assembly. The following description, although a post-Civil War one, could easily fit the antebellum scene:

> . . . soon dark figures moved along those countless little footpaths that intersect the plantation in all directions.
>
> The Praise House filled slowly. It was a small one-roomed cabin that looked weirdly alive as you approached it through the darkness. The numerous cracks in roof and walls gave the outlines of the building sketched in streaks of light against the background of the night.
>
> The room was filled with rough backless benches, and at one end was a little table for the leader. Behind this stood a long bench where several men, officers of the Praise House sat facing the people in motionless silence with half-closed eyes and bowed heads.[1]

Most planters erected these meetinghouses after 1840 to afford the slaves a place for worship and to deprive the inhabitants of various plantations of an opportunity to mingle. Yet the Praise House also offered Gullahs a means to free expression. It was not only a place for religious gathering and spiritual solace but was essential to their community structure. At the Praise House, among fellow slaves, Gullahs publicly professed what they considered a satisfactory spiritual experience, as it was necessary to obtain approval from the Praise House congregation before petitioning the master and the Baptist church for membership. If the religious experience was not inspiring enough, or if the elders and the membership doubted the candidate's sincerity, the individual was not recommended for baptism.[2]

In addition to being a means of bringing conformity and spiritual harmony to the slave quarters, the Praise House was very much like a town hall where members of the plantation gathered, using prayer, song, and exhortation to comfort each other. J. Miller McKim, a Northern observer very much interested in Gullah music, wrote in 1862:

> I asked one of these blacks . . . (Prince Rivers, Sergeant, 1st Reg. S.C.V.)—where they got these songs. "Dey make 'em, sah." "How do they make them?" After a pause, evidently casting about for an explanation, he said: "I'll tell you,

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

361
363

The Plantation "street." (Personal Collection.)

[p. 303]

162 Wadmalaw has 2,024 people. There are 963 males and 1,061 females. The median age is 19.6 years. Forty-seven point three percent are under eighteen years and 6.8% of the island's people are 65 years old and over. Over 90% of Wadmalaw's population is Black.

Yonges (St. Pauls) Island has 9,235 residents; 6,314 of this total are Black. The median age is 19.9 years. Forty-six point five per cent of the population is under eighteen years and 6.7% 65 years old and older.

Edisto has 1,374 residents. There are 672 males and 702 females. The median age is 19.7 years. Nine per cent of this community is 65 years and over, 46.1% are under eighteen years old. One thousand one hundred and fifteen of Edisto's population is Black.

BLACK SEA ISLAND FAMILIES

• 361 Black islanders generally live on the inner acreage of the islands. This pattern exists and has been maintained for a number of reasons: (a) a strong agricultural history in which farmers built homes on or close to their planting acreage, (b) long term economic deprivation where Blacks could not afford new homes which in part contributed to (c) the generational building habit of constructing newer dwellings either close to or as extensions of existing houses.

[175] With the exception of (imported) Black city and military

175 families living in housing developments on James Island,
•361 many island families pre-date the civil war. Many of these
[951] families carry the surnames of the large plantations of that era. These native families barring extreme tragedy do not actively move to different sites on or between islands. It is common place to find families who have maintained their
484 residence since and before the turn of the century. While many of the islanders born before 1900 have visited major cities (i.e., Charleston, New York, Washington, D.C., Savannah, etc.) fewer have visited all five of the Islands. Those that have, did so by car and report that these visits came after 1940. Before this period those who visited adjacent islands did so by walking and by muledrawn carts.

16 While Whites have been coming onto and suburbanizing the fringe areas of the Sea Islands, Black Islanders are leaving and dying out. It is extremely rare to find Black parents with children age eighteen and over who report all their children either at home or living on the Islands. The fact that the median age of the island population descends with distance from the mainland and where higher percentages of Black families reside supports this migrating trend. The component of change caused by birth versus death rates for the county between 1960-1970 shows a net migration of -6.3%. For Blacks this change rate was -19.7%. Furthermore, Wadmalaw in this period lost about -13% of its residents.

861
887 The elder Sea Islanders are active disciplinarians. Because of their roles as community disciplinarians coupled with the large number of households in which elders are primarily responsible for disciplining, elders will provide opportunity to assess the effect of age on disciplining
(888) pattern. Because of the status positions elders hold in Sea Island communities and because of the isolation factor, it can be anticipated that physical discipline would be found to be particularly prominent. Elder Sea Islanders may also report rather unique disciplining techniques which are either in present use, or which have become extinct. This
(178) possibility exists because the isolation of the Sea Island supports the retention of West African cultural patterns.

121
•361 Some islands are more inaccessible than others. A measure of the effect of isolation on discipline patterns
861 and techniques will be obtained through cross island comparisons. It is anticipated that there will be a linear relationship between degree of isolation and use of physical discipline.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

Town, New Jersey, visited Beaufort and the neighboring Sea Islands in 1785 he recorded in his diary, "The planters all fix at a distance from the road with avenues cut through the woods leading up to their houses. The Negro houses are laid out like a camp & sometimes resemble one."[37] The Negro quarters, or "nigger-house yard," or "nigger street," as they were variously called, did, indeed, resemble a camp spread out a quarter of a mile back of the master's or overseer's house. Edward L. Pierce in 1862 described the houses of the field hands on St. Helena Island as being "ranged in a row, sometimes in two rows fronting each other. They are 16 feet by 12, each appropriated to a family, and in some cases divided with a partition. They numbered on the plantations visited 10 to 12, and on the Coffin plantation they are doubled, numbering 23 double houses intended for 46 families."[38] Later he reported that on some of the plantations the cabins were "ill-conditioned being without chimneys,"[39] so that when there was a fire inside, the occupants were engulfed by a great cloud of smoke. In 1862 Miss Laura M. Towne described the quarters on the Eddings Point plantation, the Edgar Fripp plantation, and on one of the Jenkins plantations as "wretched hovels" with wooden chimneys and general squalor.[40] Later in the same year Charles P. Ware, another missionary to St. Helena Island, found the houses on the McTureous plantation "terribly out of repair, with wooden chimneys and mud floors."[41]

[37] Joseph W. Barnwell (ed.), "Diary of Timothy Ford, 1785-1786," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, XIII, 145.
[38] Pierce, "Report," in *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, 304.
[39] MS in Port Royal Correspondence, E. L. Pierce to S. P. Chase, April 1, 1862.
[40] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 57.
[41] *Port Royal Letters*, p. 77.

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William Howard Russell, who visited Barnwell Island in April, 1861, several months before the capture of the region by the Federal Army, has left a vivid picture of the Negro quarters on the Trescot plantation:

> The huts stand in a row, like a street, each detached with a poultry-house of rude planks behind it. . . . No attempt at any drainage or any convenience existed near them, and the same remark applies to very good houses of white people in the south. Heaps of oyster shells, broken crockery, old shoes, rags, and feathers were found near each hut. The huts were all alike windowless, and the apertures, intended to be glazed some fine day, were generally filled up with a deal of board. The roofs were shingled, and the whitewash which had once given the settlement an air of cleanliness, was now only to be traced by patches which had escaped the action of the rain.[42]

Captain Basil Hall, another English visitor to the United States, found the quarters on Edisto Island at a much earlier date, "uncommonly neat and comfortable." He thought the "cottages" might "have shamed those of many countries" he had visited. Each was "divided into small rooms or compartments, fitted with regular bed places"; all had chimneys and doors, and some, though only a few, possessed the luxury of windows. There was one cabin to every five persons.[43] In 1846 Sir Charles Lyell described the Negro houses on Butler's Island as "neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children." On Hopeton plantation he found the Negro houses "as neat as the greater part of the cot-

[42] Russell, *My Diary North and South*, pp. 146-147.
[43] Hall, *Travels in North America in 1827 and 1828*, II, 210, 211.

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CHAPTER IX

THE AFTERMATH

A ST. HELENA PICTURE IN 1865

IT WAS SUNDAY in May, 1865. The sandy road, covered in the low places with a top dressing of oyster shells, led off among the cotton fields down the Island. On either side were sagging wire fences, reminders of plantation boundaries before the war, the wire sometimes propped by drooping posts, at other times deeply embedded in the trunks of fine trees forming magnificent avenues.

Here and there were small frame houses, with narrow porches and four or five rooms, the residences of former overseers. Rude pine-log cabins, newly built, and clapboarded shanties leaning crazily in the mid-day sun dotted the fields. Gardens of growing vegetables separated the cabins from the rows of cotton that extended away as far as one could see. Little stakes occasionally marked off private holdings, sometimes the only boundaries in fields of a hundred or more acres of cotton. Just beyond was a large tract lying fallow, covered with a luxurious growth of cassina and dewberries, or perhaps a young forest of pines had sprung up among cotton furrows which, though idle for many years, were yet plainly visible.

The cotton was small, for it was not more than four weeks out of the ground, but the corn was knee high. Neat ridges were already piled up about the cabins waiting until the young sweet potato slips were large enough for transplanting. Here the fields were beautifully clean, carefully hilled up with the hoe by the women and old